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## City of New Bedford Department of City Planning

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### PLANNING BOARD

# STAFF REPORT

#### REPORT DATE

November 3, 2022

#### MEETING DATE

November 9, 2022

**Case #22-49:** Site Plan Review  
61 John Vertente  
Boulevard  
Map: 133 Lot: 47

**Owner/Applicant:** SMRE 61, LLC  
100 Duchaine Boulevard,  
New Bedford, MA 02746

**Zoning District:** Industrial C (IC) in the  
New Bedford Business  
Park

**Site Area:** 16.4± acres

**Overview:** Request by applicant for  
the construction of a new  
warehouse, a new parking  
area with a solar carport,  
a solar carport over an  
existing parking area, and  
associated site  
improvements.



**Existing parking lot at the southwest of the project site.**  
Looking south from the northerly extent of the parking lot.

## Existing Conditions

The project site is currently an existing warehouse with associated parking.

The site has 700± feet of frontage on John Vertente Boulevard.

Industrial properties abut to the north across Samuel Barnet Boulevard, east across John Vertente Boulevard, and west. Power lines abut to the south, running across the property through a 150-foot-wide easement.

The project site is located within the New Bedford Business Park in the far north end of the city. The site and the surrounding area are wooded with wetlands. The Acushnet Cedar Swamp State Reservation is further south and southwest.

### Related Permitting

Zoning Board of Appeals – Variance

Conservation Commission – Order of Conditions

## Decision Criteria

The applicant is requesting a Site Plan Review. The ordinance provides the Board the following criteria for reaching a decision.

### Site Plan Review Criteria

In considering Site Plan Approval for the proposed project, the Board must find that the plan meets the objectives identified in Section 5470 of the City's Zoning Ordinance (c.9) including:

- **Adequate access to each structure for fire and service equipment**
- **Adequate provision for utilities and stormwater drainage**
- **Site alteration shall be designed after considering the qualities of the specific location, proposed land use, the design of building form, grading, egress points and other aspects of the development so as to:**
  - Minimize cut/fill volumes, removal of 6" caliper trees and larger, removal of stone walls, displacement of wetland vegetation, extent of stormwater flow increase from the site, soil erosion and the threat of air/water pollution;
  - Maximize pedestrian/vehicular safety to/from the site
  - Minimize the obstruction of scenic views from publicly accessible locations
  - Minimize visual intrusion by controlling layout/visibility of parking, storage and outdoor service areas viewed from public ways and residential areas
  - Minimize glare from vehicle headlights and lighting fixtures
  - Minimize unreasonable departure from the character, materials and scale of buildings in the vicinity
  - Minimize contamination of groundwater from on-site wastewater disposal systems or operations on the premises involving the use, storage, handling or containment of solid/liquid wastes and hazardous substances
  - Ensure compliance with the Zoning Ordinance
  - Minimize damage to existing adjacent public ways
  - Promote orderly and reasonable internal circulation within the site so as to protect public safety

## Proposed Conditions

The applicant proposes to subdivide the existing lot in order to construct a second warehouse and parking lot at the northwest of the property with an “emergency lot egress” between the existing and proposed parking lots. Solar carports are proposed over the existing and proposed parking lots. Additional site improvements include landscaping of the project site and new lighting of the proposed warehouse and parking lot.

The applicant intends to seek ANR approval to subdivide the project site from the existing parcel. Staff note at the time of writing this report, no application has been received.

## Staff Review

The table below outlines the proposed site changes and highlights items for discussion and the Board’s consideration.

Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plans show 147 parking spaces currently on site, located northeast (54 spaces) and southwest (93 spaces) of the existing warehouse. A loading area with 16 loading spaces exists at the southeast of the existing warehouse.</li> <li>Proposed plans indicate 36 parking spaces, with 4 trailer loading spaces on the north side of the new building, and 4 box truck loading spaces on the south side.</li> <li>No bicycle parking is proposed.</li> </ul>
Landscaping & Site Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project narrative indicates vegetated wetlands are located along the eastern portion of the site, along the parcel's frontage on John Vertente Boulevard and along the eastern portion of the parcel's frontage on Samuel Barnet Boulevard.</li> <li>The project site contains a partially wooded area between the existing building and the parking lot at the southwest of the site.</li> <li>The Landscape Plan indicates new plantings at the northwest of the site adjacent to Samuel Barnet Boulevard and adjacent to the proposed loading area near the driveway on Samuel Barnet Boulevard, with foundation plantings at the northerly and southwest corners of the proposed warehouse. <b>The Board may wish to discuss the plant schedule relative to the appropriateness of species to the project site with the applicant.</b></li> <li>Existing conditions indicate unusual topography particularly on the west side of the property, resulting in significant changes in grading.</li> <li>A retaining wall “by others” is proposed along a portion of the westerly border of the project site.</li> <li></li> </ul>
Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plans indicate a monument sign is proposed west of driveway on Samuel Barnet Boulevard.</li> </ul>
Circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project narrative indicates vehicles currently access the site through the existing driveways on John Vertente Boulevard and Samuel Barnet Boulevard. <b>The Board may wish to discuss whether access easements are proposed and condition that draft easements be submitted for review with ANR materials.</b></li> <li>The applicant proposes vehicles accessing the new warehouse and will use the existing site driveway off Samuel Barnet Boulevard for ingress and egress.</li> <li>The applicant has not provided a truck turning or emergency access plan or requested a waiver. <b>The Board may wish to discuss how trucks will access the site relative to the proposed solar canopies and determine if a truck turning plan is needed.</b></li> <li>An emergency egress is proposed between the northwest corner of the existing parking lot and the southerly edge of the proposed parking lot. <b>The Board may wish to discuss emergency access and details of the emergency egress, such as the surface material proposed, with the applicant.</b></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The location of the proposed emergency egress is steeply sloped. <b>The Board may wish to review the change in grade with the applicant.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Traffic/Transit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant has not provided trip generation estimates related to the proposed new warehouse. <b>Given traffic concerns related to the Business Park, the Board may wish to request estimates be provided.</b></li> <li><b>It is within the Board’s purview to request a traffic impact analysis.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant does not provide a proposed use for the new warehouse building the site plan review application and indicates the proposed number of employees as “TBD.” <b>The Board may wish to determine the proposed use and estimated number of employees with the applicant.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Stormwater</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The stormwater report indicates three existing design points were analyzed in the northwest quadrant of the site.</li> <li>Proposed conditions detailed in the stormwater report include two additional design points for roof runoff and parking lot stormwater mitigation. The report indicates each design point receives runoff from one subcatchment area. Subcatchment areas consist of on-site and off-site areas from which stormwater runoff will eventually discharge to the design point.</li> <li>Post-development plans within the stormwater report indicate changes are limited to the proposed limits of work.</li> <li>Two catch basins are proposed north of the proposed warehouse at the north of the parking lot. One catch basin is proposed southwest of the proposed warehouse along the proposed retaining wall.</li> <li>Two recharge systems are proposed under the proposed parking lot, north and southwest of the proposed warehouse.</li> <li><b>Planning staff defers to the Department of Public Infrastructure regarding compliance with the City’s Stormwater Rules and Regulations.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Snow Storage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>The Board may wish to discuss snow storage with the applicant.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Waste Receptacles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plans indicate a dumpster area located behind the proposed warehouse between the box truck loading bays.</li> </ul>
<b>Utilities and Mechanical Systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A 150-foot-wide utility easement runs along the south of the site.</li> <li>Plans indicate a proposed sewer line from the north of the proposed warehouse to the main on Samuel Barnet Boulevard.</li> <li>Mechanicals for the existing building are sited at the rear. A small HVAC unit is located at the front of the existing building west of the main entrance.</li> <li>A hydrant is located on premises in front of the building. Hydrants are also located nearby along John Vertente Boulevard and Samuel Barnet Boulevard.</li> <li><b>The Board may wish to discuss the location of proposed mechanicals with the applicant.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Lighting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One pole-mounted light is proposed at the north of the proposed parking lot, adjacent to the driveway on Samuel Barnet Boulevard.</li> <li>Wall pack lighting is proposed in 10 locations on the proposed warehouse.</li> <li>Photometrics indicate no light spilling into the abutting lot or into the wooded area southwest of the existing building.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plans indicate a footcandle rating of 5 fc at the lights to 0.3 fc across the proposed parking lot.</li> <li><b>The Board may wish to discuss illumination of the site no earlier than one hour prior to opening and no later than one hour after closing with the applicant.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Demolition and Erosion Control</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Grading and Utilities plan indicates straw and wattle erosion controls at southerly and easterly limits of work for the proposed warehouse and parking lot in the northwest of the site.</li> </ul>
<b>Architectural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A 30,215 + square feet commercial warehouse is proposed at the northwest corner of the site, west of existing structures.</li> <li>The applicant proposes a 9,633 square feet solar canopy on the west side of the proposed warehouse. Plans indicate a 14-foot minimum clearance and maximum clearance of 18<math>\pm</math> feet from grade to bottom of canopy. The canopy width is labeled 48<math>\pm</math> feet at a 5% slope.</li> <li>The applicant is also seeking to construct a 29,800 square feet solar canopy over existing parking spaces located to the south of the proposed building. Plans indicate a minimum clearance of 14 feet and maximum clearance of 26 feet-11 inches from grade to bottom of canopy. The canopy width is labeled 151 feet-11 inches<math>\pm</math> at a 5% slope.</li> <li>Solar canopy plans indicate footings for both canopies spaced 30<math>\pm</math> feet apart.</li> <li>Renderings and elevations indicate rooftop solar panels are proposed over the entire rooftop of the proposed warehouse.</li> <li>Renderings indicate windows along the northwesterly and westerly façade.</li> </ul>
<b>Master Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposal is consistent with the Master Plan's goal to increase workforce opportunities and ensure the availability of clean, renewable, inexpensive energy that is locally produced.</li> </ul>

## Interdepartmental Review Comments

As required under city ordinance, the case submittal documents were distributed to City Clerk, City Solicitor, Health Department, Inspectional Services, Engineering, Public Infrastructure, Conservation Commission, Fire Department and School Department.

At the time of writing this report, no departmental memos have been received.

## Site Photos



**Existing building east of the proposed project location.**  
Looking south from the driveway off Samuel Barnet Blvd.



**Rear of existing building east of proposed project location.**  
Looking north from rear loading bay accessway.



**Entrance off Samuel Barnet Boulevard.**  
Looking south from across the road.



**Location of the proposed building with solar carport.**  
Looking north from the existing parking lot.



**Existing conditions along the abutting property line.**  
Looking west from the existing parking lot.



**Frontage at proposed project site.**  
Looking west from driveway along Samuel Barnet Blvd.



**Utility easement at the southerly border.**  
Looking east from the southwest of the site.



**Parking lot existing conditions.**  
Looking north from the lot.

## Materials for Consideration

The engineered plan submission is shown as “SITE PLAN – 61 John Vertente Boulevard” dated 10/7/22, and prepared by Farland Corp. of Dartmouth, MA. The plans are stamped by Christian Farland, PE. The plan set consists of the following sheets:

- Cover Sheet
- Sheet 1 Existing Conditions
- Sheet 2 Layout
- Sheet 3 Grading & Utilities
- Sheet 4 Lighting/Landscape
- Sheet 5 Notes & Legend
- Sheets 6-8 Details

The solar canopy plan submission is shown as “SOLAR CANOPY for Parallel Products” dated 5/2/22, and prepared by TerraSmart of Cincinnati, OH. The plan set consists of the following sheets:

- Cover Sheet
- SC002 General Notes and Module Specification Sheet
- SC003 Site Plan
- SC101 Foundation and Column Plan
- SC102 Foundation and Column Plan
- SC301 Canopy Section
- SC302 Canopy Section

The architectural plan submission is shown as “Mixed Use Building – 61 John Vertente Boulevard” dated 10/21/22, and prepared by Dennis Colwell Architects of Foxborough, MA. The plan set consists of the following sheets:

- A5.1 Elevations
- A1.0 Floor Plan

In addition to the submitted materials, the application has submitted waiver requests for the Board’s consideration as follows:

- Development Impact Statement – Applicant notes all work is in Industrial zone. Staff recommend the Board consider the existing conditions of the site and impacts of the project proposal.

## Recommended Conditions



**Site Plan Approval.** Having reviewed the submitted materials, planning staff offers the following recommendations for conditions to the Planning Board should it act favorably on the requested site plan approval for the project:

That the following **specific conditions** be applied to this decision:

1. The applicant shall submit copies of an ANR plan and all related easements recorded at the Bristol County Registry of Deeds to the Department of City Planning prior to the issuance of a building permit.
2. The applicant shall comply with all conditions of the forthcoming Order of Conditions granted by the Conservation Commission.
3. The applicant shall comply with all conditions of the variance granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals.
4. The applicant shall coordinate to resolve all comments in the Department of Public Infrastructure’s forthcoming memorandum prior to the issuance of a building permit.
5. Lighting shall be dark sky-friendly and shall be illuminated no earlier than one hour prior to opening and no later than one hour after closing.
6. The applicant shall submit revised plans indicating the following prior to the issuance of a building permit:
  - a. Parking lot emergency egress surface material, section, and details;
  - b. Parking lot repairs, concrete curbing, and pavement markings;

- c. Solar canopy transformer locations, building mechanicals, and electrical connections.

That the following **general conditions** also be applied to the decision:

7. The project shall be completed according to the plans, notes, reports, and specifications submitted for consideration and final approval by the Planning Board.
8. The project shall be undertaken in a manner consistent with any departmental memos received in relation to plan and placed on file for Planning Board consideration. The conditions of such memos shall be considered to be part of these conditions.
9. The applicant shall submit final plan revisions to the Department of City Planning in the following formats: one (1) -11" x 17" Plan Set and one (1) CD or USB with Plan Set in PDF format and shall ensure that these same plans are properly submitted to the Department of Inspectional Services.
10. The applicant shall ensure that a copy of the Notice of Decision, bearing the certification of the New Bedford City Clerk signifying no appeal has been made against the project's approval, be provided for the Department of City Planning case file folder.
11. The applicant shall present any proposed modification from the approved plans for consideration to the Director of City Planning for determination as to whether the modified plan must return before this Board for further review.
12. The rights authorized by the granted approval must be exercised by issuance of a Building Permit by the Department of Inspectional Services and acted upon within one year from the date the decision was granted, or they will lapse.
13. The developer and site contractor must schedule a pre-construction meeting with the Department of Public Infrastructure prior to the start of construction.

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**Materials Provided by the Applicant** are available at: <https://www.newbedford-ma.gov/planning/planning-board-agenda-info-2022/>

Staff Report prepared by: Rachel Mulroy Staff Planner  
Reviewed by: Jennifer Carloni, City Planner



## 61 John Vertente Boulevard Map: 133 Lot: 47

*NOTE: Property line is approximate; for discussion purposes, only. Aerial image is oriented north.*